

Encourage passengers with arthritis symptoms to sit toward the aisle so they can stretch their legs. If possible, adjust the seat so there is more leg room.

Getting up to exit the vehicle could also be a problem for a passenger. If there are no armrests for the passenger to push up from, you may want to again give support from

Although you should not ask the passenger what his or her condition is because of privacy concerns, you can always ask if and how you can be of assistance.

under the elbow. "Don't try to take their hands to help them, because you don't want to put a lot of pressure on smaller joints," says Winters. "Use a larger joint or area, like the elbow or the forearm."

You can also carry a few items in your vehicle to make the trip more comfortable for passengers with arthritis. Winters recommends carrying a step-stool to assist passengers as they climb into the vehicle, especially if the first step of the bus is high.

You may want to have a pillow to offer to the passenger to place behind the neck or lower back for support. Seatbelt cushions that Velcro onto the shoulder strap are also a good idea.

Helping a passenger with arthritis is as simple as offering a hand or a pillow. By following these tips, you can make the ride more comfortable and enjoyable for your passenger. ▲

Ready for winter driving?

by Justin Dorsey

As old man winter approaches, icy and snow-packed roads are around the corner. Are you ready to drive on them? If not, this article's discussion of winter driving techniques and safety precautions can help.

While lying in bed, before drifting off to sleep, you flip on the news for tomorrow's weather. The weatherman says the year's first snowfall, likely between 3 and 5 inches, will happen overnight. Instinctively, you know to set your morning alarm a little earlier. However, the Kansas Highway Patrol knows something else. They



you remember to slow down? You should. Driving too fast for conditions was cited by Lieutenant Eichkorn as the leading cause of accidents in winter driving conditions. He suggests increasing follow-

This winter, if your bus begins to lose power or is difficult to start don't assume an engine problem. It might be something else. It might be caused by your diesel fuel. Diesel fuel, in cold conditions, can turn into a gel type substance which can cause a vehicle to lose power, start, but only have enough power to idle, or not start at all. The problem occurs when molecules in the diesel fuel combine to become more solid, thus restricting fuel from passing through the fuel filter. As a result, the engine is starved of fuel. If this occurs, add a diesel fuel additive to lower the fuel's "gelling temperature," or install a diesel fuel heater, or both.

know many accidents are likely to happen. According to Lieutenant John Eichkorn of the Kansas Highway Patrol, "Most people's winter driving skills are rusty from driving in warmer conditions so the first snowfall is often the worst."

Once at work, you will remove snow from your vehicle's windshields and lights as part of your pre-trip inspection, buckle up, and leave for your first stop of the day. But will

ing distance, remembering that acceleration and braking times increase on winter road conditions, and knowing whether your vehicle has anti-lock brakes. Knowing whether your vehicle has anti-lock brakes determines the correct braking technique. If your vehicle has anti-lock brakes, firmly press the brake pedal until your vehicle stops. However, if your vehicle does not have anti-lock brakes, firmly

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to keep that information private.

Keep the computer monitor out of view of people who don't need to see that information. Limit the number of people in your agency who have access to the information, and make sure it's only accessible with a password. Passwords should consist of a combination of numbers and letters, both capital and lowercase, to make them more difficult to crack. You should also change your passwords periodically.

E-mails can easily be intercepted if you do not use encryption. Buy encryption software for your computer, or use a HIPAA-secure e-mail service, from companies such as Safety Send, PostX or Orchestra. Even with protected e-mail, try not to discuss PHI via e-mail at all, if you can help it.

Even if your services do not fall under a HIPAA agreement, take the initiative to protect your passengers' privacy anyway. Your passengers will appreciate it.

For more information, contact Peggy Graham at: peggy.graham@da.state.ks.us.

Sources

"Data Entry: Doing more for Privacy." Clolery, Paul. *The Non-Profit Times*. May 1, 2005.

HIPAA Information Guide: Drivers Quick Reference. State of West Virginia Department of Transportation, Division of Public Transit.

"HIPAA: Safeguarding Information." Holloway, Jennifer Daw. *Monitor on Psychology*. <http://www.apa.org/monitor/jan05/hipaa.html> 2005. ▲

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press the brake pedal until the point of wheel lock-up, then release. Quickly repeat this process until your vehicle stops.

Does this thought sound familiar?: "My vehicle is four-wheel drive so I have nothing to worry about from snow-packed roads." If so, think again. According to Lieutenant Eichkorn, "Drivers of four-wheel drive vehicles have a false sense of security on winter road conditions. Therefore, they may become complacent." Remember, although four-wheel drive gives a vehicle additional maneuverability on winter roads; four-wheel drive will not stop a

vehicle quicker than if it had two-wheel drive. Bottom line, no matter what the vehicle, winter driving is dangerous, even for large vehicles, like buses.

No one wants to be stranded, especially in a snow storm, but it happens, so being prepared is important. For example, Reno County Area Transit puts kitty litter in their paratransit vehicles to spread on the road for additional tire traction. They also provide their paratransit drivers with rubber shoe covers with spikes on the bottom. The shoe covers are placed over the driver's shoes and provide additional traction for walking on wintry surfaces. Finally, for extra precaution, a vehicle emer-

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Winter driving videotapes available from Kansas RTAP:

Winter Driving Safety (re: buses), 13 minutes. Discusses driving techniques and safety hazards. Produced by MetroLink, 2000.

Driving Snow: The Keys to Winter Driving (re: automobiles), 15 minutes. Discusses braking techniques, skid techniques, front wheel and four wheel drive differences, and the importance of proper tires. Produced by Savafilm, 1993.

Ready, Set, Winter: Driving Safety on Ice and Snow (re: automobiles), 13 minutes. Discusses pre-winter maintenance, braking techniques, skid techniques, and what to do if you become stuck in the snow. Produced by AAA, 1996.

Safe Winter Driving Considerations (re: automobiles), 13 minutes. Discusses pre-winter maintenance, braking techniques, front wheel and four wheel drive differences, handling hills, and passing. Produced by the National Safety Council, 2001.

Why Skid?: Winter Driving Techniques (re: automobiles), 18 minutes. Discusses wheel grip, weight transfer, steering, and braking techniques. Produced by Bridgestone Tire, 1994.

To request a video, go to <http://www.kutv.ku.edu>, click on the Lending Library link, then type the video title in the "Resource Name" box and click Search. Then continue with the request process. Or contact Jason Pfister at the Kansas University Transportation Center at (785) 864-5658.

gency kit can be placed in a vehicle. The emergency kit should include at the minimum: a blanket, book, booster cables, candle, clothing, flashlight, first aid kit, gloves, hat, kitty litter, non-perishable food, shovel, and a send-help flag to alert passing vehicles of the emergency situation.

We hope this article has refreshed you on winter driving techniques and safety precautions. For additional winter driving instruction and information please check out the source below and those mentioned throughout the article.

Sources

“Winter Survival Kit,” *Grassroutes*, Volume 15, Number 3: 2002.

Other sources include videotapes and Web sites listed in this article. ▲

Winter driving Web sites

<http://www.kansashighwaypatrol.org/> then click media
Kansas State Highway Patrol brochure on winter driving.

<http://www.fema.gov/pdf/hazards/wndrvfs.pdf>
Federal Emergency Management Agency brochure of winter driving tips.

<http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/winterdrive/winterdrive.htm>
Information on winter driving techniques and emergency kit preparation from the Ontario Ministry of Transportation

<http://www.cartalk.com/content/features/WinterDriving/>
Information on pre-winter vehicle maintenance and winter driving techniques from “Car Talk” on National Public Radio.

<http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/quicknotes/badsnow.htm>
Information on driving in blowing snow and whiteout conditions from the Ontario Ministry of Transportation.